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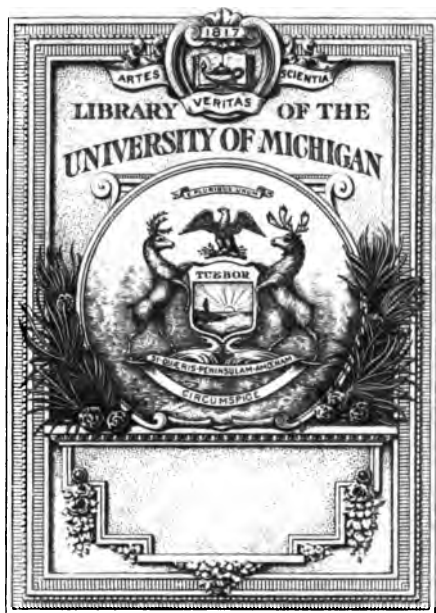


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NOTES ON

*MILL'S EXAMINATION of  
HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY.*

*THOS. EDWARDS, F.E.S.*

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**Notes on Mill's Examination**  
**OF**  
**SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY.**



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*NOTES ON MILL'S EXAMINATION.*

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THE  
RELATIVITY, THE UNCONDITIONED,  
BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE :  
BEING  
SOME REMARKS ON JOHN STUART MILL'S EXAMINATION OF  
SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY.

BY THOMAS EDWARDS, F.E.I.S.  
DOVETON COLLEGE, CALCUTTA.

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*Μεγα βιβλιον, μεγα χαχον.*

"Truth, like a torch, the more it's shook it shines."

CALCUTTA:  
THACKER, SPINK, AND CO.,  
Publishers to the University.  
LONDON: W. THACKER AND Co., 87, NEWGATE STREET.  
1878.

"One mortal, one nation or generation of mortals, may flare a flambeau, and another twinkle a taper ; still the sphere of human enlightenment is, at best a point ; compared with the boundless universe of night surrounding it, Science is a drop ; nescience is the ocean in which that drop is whelmed."—SIR WM. HAMILTON.

## PREFACE.

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THE greater part of the following pages were written during the lifetime of the late J. S. Mill, and were laid aside at his death. I make no apology for printing them now, nor for the manner in which I have dealt with the opinions and criticisms of J. S. Mill. I believe that Sir William Hamilton has been attacked most unjustly ; and that his critic exhibits, in almost every page of his "Examination," a total misapprehension of the doctrines of Sir William Hamilton. I have dealt briefly with the three leading doctrines—The Unconditioned, The Relativity, and The Synthesis of Belief and Knowledge in Cognition.

The school to which Mill and his followers belong is not altogether deficient in the "power of assertion." I have, therefore, no fear that the reputation of Mill as a thinker, such as it is, will be allowed to suffer from any diffidence on their part. I look for and cordially invite the same unsparing criticism

I have administered. Whatever is true and just, will live ; whatever is unjust and false, will die, as it deserves.

Professor Veitch of the University of Glasgow, the friend and biographer of Sir William Hamilton, has kindly permitted me to print the following few lines by way of prefatory note.

“I have gone over your paper, which I return to you. I think it a good and clear criticism of Mr. Mill’s Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Doctrines on the points taken up. Whether it would find readers in these days of hurry and slipshod thinking, is a different question.”

I think it due to Professor Veitch to say, that, since the time he did me the honour of looking over my manuscript, I have re-written and augmented the chapter on Belief and Knowledge.

54, *Park Street.*

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# Notes on Mill's Examination

OF

## SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE RELATIVITY OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

HIS (Sir William Hamilton's) negative theory on this subject (the Infinite and Absolute) comes directly out of his fundamental position, that neither thought nor consciousness can transcend the relation between the knower and the known, *i.e.*, his theory of subjective relativity; and that in the object known there is always a plurality of relation, *i.e.*, his doctrine of objective relativity. He would most thoroughly have repudiated his critic John Stuart Mill's "substantial" doctrine of Relativity, *viz.*, that knowledge is only or mainly relative when it is held to be an impression on the mind from an unknown object or world. This Hamilton would have regard as not properly a doctrine of Relativity at all. (Professor Veitch in *Mind*, No. VI, p. 226).

"The Relativity of Human Knowledge." To this subject Mill devotes two chapters of his book, "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," the 2nd and 3rd. In Chapter II he gives an exposition of the various senses in which that doctrine may be held, and in Chapter III attacks the Relativity as held by Hamilton. The following is an abstract of Mill's 2nd chapter, in which he gives a catalogue of the various senses in which the "Relativity of Human Knowledge" may be held—

1st. We only know a thing by knowing it as distinguished from something else; all consciousness is of difference; a thing is only seen to be what it is by contrast with what it is not.



In this acceptance Mill admits that it expresses a real and important law of our nature; that it is sanctioned by high authority (mentions Bain as habitually using "Relativity" in this sense, and that, with this use of it, he has no fault to find); Hamilton, he says, does not ordinarily or intentionally use it in this sense, though he (Hamilton) recognises the truth which, when thus used, it seems to express. In general (says Mill) the Relativity Hamilton has in view is not between the thing known and the object compared with it, but *between the thing and the mind knowing*. (Mill's Examination, p. 6.)

This, by the way, we shall show, before we have done, is *not* Hamilton's Relativity, but only a fragment of it.

2nd. Our knowledge of objects, and even our fancies about them, consist of nothing but sensations which they excite, or which we imagine them exciting in us.

This is the doctrine of the Relativity, says Mill, in its simplest, purest, and most proper acceptance; but by whom held, he leaves the reader to imagine. Again he says (Examination, p. 8), "an object is to us nothing else than that which affects our senses in a certain manner:" there is nothing real but these sensations.

3rd. There are two forms of this doctrine, the first is: "Sensations are not only all that we can know of what we call objects, but that there is no ground for believing anything else to exist. We have no evidence of a hidden cause of sensations. Affections of mind are all that we can know to exist." He instances, as holding this view, Berkeley, Hume, and Ferrier. This, he says however, is far from being the usual shape in which the Relativity is held.

4th. The second form or modification of what Mill

calls the simplest, purest, and most proper acceptation of the Relativity is—the distinction between the *ego* and the *non ego* is not only one of language, nor is it a formal distinction between two aspects of the same reality, but it is a distinction between two realities self-existent, neither depending on the other; and these realities are (1) noumenal, (2) phenomenal. The holders of this opinion “believe that there is a universe of things in themselves;” and that whenever there is an impression on our sense, there is a thing in itself behind the phenomena (the impression) and the cause of it. The noumenal cannot be known with our present faculties. The representations generated in self are all we can know respecting them. All knowledge can only be relative to the degree of intelligence and the knowing mind. “It is in this form that the Relativity is held by the greater number of those who profess to hold it,” attaching any definite meaning to the term.

(Mill's Examination, p. 11.) These are again divided into several distinct schools of thinkers. Agreeing in the opinion that all that can be known of noumena is bare existence, there is a class who hold that mere sensations do not compose all the relative knowledge. There are additional elements of knowledge besides sensation and an unknown cause; these are still relative: they result from the nature of the mind itself. (Kant.)

(Mill's Examination, p. 12.) By the side of this there is another philosophy older in date, which, though eclipsed for a time, and often contemptuously treated by it, is, according to present appearances, likely to survive it. Taking the same view as Kant, it yet does not think it necessary to ascribe to the mind innate forms in which,

as it were, objects are moulded into these appearances ; but holds that place, extension, cause, &c., are conceptions put together out of ideas of sensation by the known laws of association. This, the doctrine of James Mill, Bain, and other eminent thinkers, is compatible with either the acceptance or rejection of the Berkelean theory. Both accept the doctrine in its widest sense : all knowledge is mere impressions of things on our consciousness.

Between these two, that of Kant and that held by James Mill, Bain, and others, there are many intermediate. Brown regards our notion of time and space as a product of association, our knowledge of an external world to be limited to the modes in which we are affected by it. Herbert Spencer insists on the certainty of the existence of things and of their eternal relegation to the regions of the unknowable. This is apparently Comte's doctrine.

The Relativity is capable of being understood in two other senses at least. In one of these it means something quite insignificant. Suppose a philosopher to hold that certain properties of objects are in the thing and not in our senses, and are known to us *not* indirectly as the inferred cause of sensation, but by direct perceptions of them in the outward object : suppose the same philosopher to affirm that all knowledge is phenomenal and relative to us, "our first feeling respecting a thinker who professed both these doctrines would be to wonder what he could possibly mean by the last : he must mean one of two trivialities"—

1st. We can only know what we have the power of knowing. All knowledge is relative to us, because it is we who know it.

2nd. There is another mode of understanding the

Relativity intermediate between these *insignificant truism* and the substantial doctrine previously examined.

“Perception of things as they are may be so mixed and confused by impressions derived from their action on us, as to give a relative character to the whole. This is a possible opinion, and one holding it would hold Relativity with some meaning.”

Here endeth John Stuart Mill's exposition of the Relativity. The late Professor Mansel has justly said (Philosophy of the Conditioned, p. 141): “Mill's method of criticism makes it generally necessary to commence with a statement of the criticised theory *as it is really* before proceeding to *his* exposition of it *as it is not.*” The present instance offers no exception to this rule.

Let us premise, in the first place, that the Relativity of Human Knowledge is a doctrine which Mill had not mastered when he wrote his Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy. His exposition of the Relativity from beginning to end is a mass of utter confusion. It is not an exposition of the Relativity at all. It is but a collection of fragmentary opinions torn from the body of doctrine to which it belongs; it is that, nothing more. To write an exposition of the Relativity of Human Knowledge would be to write a history of philosophy; for all philosophy is but an attempt to fix the limits of the knowable in Nature, Humanity, and God. Mill set about his exposition without any apparent guiding principle and with no adequate knowledge of the subject on which he wrote; and the result is, that we have, jumbled up together, forming a unique and almost inextricable bewilderment, at least three distinctly marked fields of philosophic thought—Psychology, Cosmology, Ontology

Out of this maze Mill never emerges, and the only clue to this darkening of knowledge, is to get some acquaintances with the distinctive doctrines of the examiner and the examined.

1st. First then, with reference to Psychology, the science of the facts of consciousness. Regarding the thinking principle, Mill is a Sensationalist, or rather an Experientialist. In common with all the adherents of this school, he denies to mind all innate, connate, *a priori* forms or moulds, in which sensations are cast and shaped. Notions, such as those of time, space, cause, &c., are conceptions arising not from any independent unit called a mind, but are simply the product or educt of what he calls the laws of association. He openly avows that mind is a thing of shreds and patches, made up from subjective modes and affections (though what it is that records, remembers, &c., these subjective modes and affections he does not condescend to say), held together by inseparable association. Mind, with Mill, is nothing more than a series of inseparable associations: a permanent possibility of feelings. This "series" formed itself from the permanent possibility of sensation (his name for an outer world). Yet he admits that this series is conscious of itself!

Hamilton's Psychological doctrines were the direct opposite of those of Mill's. He believed and taught, that there are innate *a priori* forms into which all sensation, all subjective affections, are cast by the mind perceiving: that the mind does not only possess a ruling discursive faculty, which it brought with it into the world and unfolded there, but that it has, as a peculiarly distinguishing characteristic of its nature, not very well known

unbegotten powers and faculties: unbegotten, because not derived from any known or conceivable law of association (though association is admitted to be one of the many modes in which mind works); nor derived from any known or conceivably possible mode of subjective affection, but standing out clear and well defined, as utterly absolutely underivable from sensation or experience, as not given in the law of association, as not derived from this state of existence at all, but as coming with us from "God, who is our home."

Such, stated briefly, is the antagonistic doctrines of these philosophers on the powers and capacities of the human soul (mind). What wonder is it that a sensationalist coming to the works of Hamilton, with all the traditionary and hereditary conceptions (prejudices shall I call them?) of the sect to which he belongs,—trained in the doctrines of that school from infancy,—bringing with him a pretty extensive acquaintance with the physical sciences,—thus confirming in him the tendencies of that school, should discover in almost every doctrine of Hamilton a deadly foe to that cherished scheme of philosophy, which had been the delight of his life and no small portion of its business. Hamilton's Psychological opinions could only be by Mill seen relatively, *id est* through the media of the doctrines which he himself believed and taught. Of course he saw that a compromise between the two was impossible; that as long as *Realism* as held by Reid and Hamilton continued to be advocated, Sensationalism would be confronted at all points, by an unyielding foe; and believing that Sensationalism, or as he calls it *Experientalism*, was the only philosophy worthy of a philosopher, he, therefore, with all the earnestness

of a man fighting for a cherished truth, threw himself with all his force into the arena of fight, and blindly, mercilessly, ignorantly, hacked and hewed at every doctrine, every distinctive doctrine, which Hamilton (not the least ornament to scholarship and philosophy which Britain has produced) during the course of his active life ever promulgated.

2nd. The difference between Hamilton and Mill is not only Psychological, they differ Cosmologically. In their theories regarding an external world there is antagonism not less distinct and unmistakable. Hamilton is, what Reid was, a Natural Realist. He accepts the veracity of consciousness in general. Things are as we see them, minus the secondary qualities. He advocates the reality and relative knowableness of an outer world different from self. He is a Presentationist, and affirms again and again that the *ego* has an *immediate presentative* consciousness of the objective—a direct intuition of the real. The knowledge given in perception is real, but it is relative, not absolute, yet true as far as it goes. It is relative in more senses than one, which we shall by and by consider. Mill's theory of an external world can be very shortly stated in his own words: "Matter may be defined as a permanent possibility of sensation. We are incapable of attaching any other meaning to the term object. If I am asked whether I believe in matter, I ask whether the questioner accepts this definition of it? If he does, I believe in matter, and so do all Berkelians. In any other sense I do not."

From this and kindred other passages we may learn that the theory which Mill holds regarding an external world is an idealistic one. With Mill, sensations only are

permanent and real; beyond them there is nothing else. Perhaps in this he approaches Brown, and is with him a Cosmothetic idealist, though he differs materially from Brown in other points; consequently he believes that our knowledge of an outer world is a *representative* knowledge. We look at it through the media of sensation: it is therefore *mediate*, not immediate; it is *representative*, not *presentative*. With Hamilton an outer world is a phenomenal reality, relative known (relative in the senses we shall by and by learn). With Mill it is a phenomenal ideality, apprehended by a permanent possibility of feeling, as a permanent possibility of sensation!

3rd. On one point both Philosophers are agreed, *viz.*, Ontologically. They both declare, that things as they are in themselves are, in our present state, utterly unknowable.

We shall now proceed to show that it is out of this agreement and those differences that Mill's misunderstanding of Hamilton has arisen. It is from the Ontological stand-point that Mill frequently views Hamilton. When Hamilton speaks Ontologically, Mill agrees with him, and, it may be, understands. When he speaks Psychologically, or Cosmologically, Mill utterly fails to understand; and in language peculiarly choice and expressive, charges Hamilton with almost every sin of which a philosophical writer can be guilty, utter incapacity among the rest.

We believe that, with a change of names, the concluding language of Mill's Examination may, in strictest justice, be applied to himself. "Sir William Hamilton studied the eminent thinkers of old only from the outside; he did not throw his own mind into their manner



of thought; he did not survey the field of speculation from their stand-point, see each object as it would be seen with their lights and with their modes of looking. The opinion of an author stands, an isolated fact in Hamilton, without foundation in the author's individuality or connection with his other doctrines. For want of this elucidation, one by another, even the opinions themselves, are very liable to be misunderstood" (Mill's Examination, p. 560).

Here, we think, Mill has happily, though quite unconsciously, put his finger on the fertile source of his own blundering. He never took the hint thrown out by himself in the last pages of his "Examination," so that any predilections of his on Hamilton's Philosophy, or indeed any philosophy not sensational, however much they may be lauded at first, shall ultimately be estimated at their true intrinsic value, and fade into forgetfulness, shrouded in the kindly mists of the past.

With regard more particularly to the Relativity of Human Knowledge, this is Mill's final and decisive utterance. After quoting and commenting on a number of passages taken from Hamilton, he says (Examination, p. 28): "I cannot help drawing from this collection of passages that Hamilton either never held, or when he wrote the Dissertation, had ceased to hold, the doctrine for which he has been so often praised and nearly as often attacked. The Relativity of human knowledge he did sincerely believe that he held; but he represented it in every sense which makes it other than a barren truism. In the only meaning in which he really maintained it, there is nothing to maintain. It is an identical proposition, and nothing more."

Before turning to this remarkable deliverance of John Stuart Mill we thought it right, for the purpose of our argument and the cause of truth, to call attention to the points of difference and agreement in the systems of philosophy advocated by each. This we have done; and if we have been intelligible, and are equally fortunate in our epitomizing of the doctrine of the Relativity, the whole question, and Mill's misunderstanding of it, will be apparent (see Appendix I to Sir William Hamilton's Discussions, Philosophical, A, Conditions of the Thinkable).

(Space.) Knowledge is relative, because we only know a thing by distinguishing it from that which it is not. We are conscious of light, heat, etc., when the opposites or contraries of these are absent; and when these latter again become the objects of knowledge, we know them only in virtue of the absence of their co-relatives. Knowledge always implies the cognizance of two opposing qualities, attributes or objects: it is thus relative, relative as to space, a relation of existence, co-existence, or non-existence.

(Time.) All knowledge is not only a knowledge of the relation of existence and co-existence, hence a relation in space; but it is also a knowledge of relation in Time. Phenomena are not only related to each other as existing together in space; they also succeed each other in an order that may be observed, and at intervals of duration that may be known. In succession and duration, *id est* in Time, knowledge is relative.

(Self.) Knowledge is relative, because there must be a knowing intelligence as well as a thing to know. Consciousness cannot be realized without an

energy of judgment. All knowledge is thus a relation between the knowing and the known; and this relation of self and not self must exist in all intelligences short of The Infinite. It is only in Deity that relativity ceases; and gives place to knowledge that is infinite and absolute.

This then is the only possible condition of human knowledge. It is made up of a triple relativity of space, time, and self. In our knowledge of an outer world, the relativities of time and space are the bulkiest factors; over and between these, self moderates. In our knowledge of a subjective world time and self are the relative and fundamental factors of which our knowledge is composed. In all these senses then human knowledge is relative. The prime factors of its relativity are space, time, and self. From these are derived existence, co-existence, non-existence, likeness, unlikeness, succession, duration, and causation. In the object known, there is always a plurality of relation: this is Hamilton's doctrine of Objective relativity. Consciousness, cannot transcend the relations between the knower and the known: this is Hamilton's Subjective relativity.

Such, very briefly stated, is our apprehension of the Relativity as maintained by Hamilton. If in this, as Mill says, there is nothing to maintain. If this Relativity is an identical proposition and nothing more, then language has no meaning. John Stuart Mill understands neither his own English nor Sir William Hamilton's. If Hamilton had said that "our knowledge of objects, and even our fancies about them, consist of nothing but sensations which they excite, or which we imagine

them exciting in us," and had declared, as Mill does, that this is the doctrine of the Relativity in its simplest, purest, and most proper acceptation, he might very justly have been charged with "having ceased to hold the doctrine for which he has been so often praised, and nearly as often attacked." He would justly have laid himself open to the accusation of having given only a partial one-sided explication of the facts of consciousness. He would not have given to the world a doctrine of the Relativity at all, for what Mill calls the doctrine of the Relativity in its simplest, purest, and most proper acceptation is no doctrine of the Relativity. The explicit statement of that sentence, so much admired by Mill for its simplicity and purity, is simply, sensation is the sum-total of all knowledge. Where is the Relativity? How a doctrine of Relativity can be tortured out of it, was known only to John Stuart Mill. But it may be said, that though not explicitly, yet implicitly there is here a doctrine of the Relativity. You have sensations standing in the relation of chief interpreter between a self and an outer world of objects. But an outer world with Mill is but a permanent possibility of sensation, *id est*, there are only sensations; therefore, the relativity cannot be between an outer world of objects which does not exist except in sensation, and an inner world of self. Sensations cannot be, or stand in any relation to objects, for sensation and self are all that is (*esse*). The only conceivable relativity left is one between the sensation and the knowing subject, and this is a barren truism with Mill; but even this is not left. For the knowing subject, Mill says, is a "permanent possibility of feeling," and sensation is nothing

more than subjective feeling; therefore the relation is one between a feeling and a feeling, *neither* of which is different from the other. The simplicity and purity of this favourite doctrine of Mills on the Relativity I think will now be apparent.

We have seen what Mill considers the doctrine of the Relativity in its simplest and purest form. Let us now see what he makes of Hamilton's Relativity.

Mill opens his chapter on The Relativity as held by Hamilton with a series of quotations from Hamilton, interspersed with running comments of his own, the intention being to show that Hamilton contradicts himself. The substance of the first quotation (Discussions, p. 643; Mill, p. 17). All Knowledge is Relative; of things absolutely or in themselves, we know nothing. All that we know is phenomenal—phenomenal of the unknown." The next is from Dissertation appended to Hamilton's Reid, p. 825, regarding the primary and secondary qualities. In this is asserted the "consciousness or immediate perception of certain essential attributes of matter objectively existing (primary), other qualities are unknown in themselves; and only inferred as causes to account for certain subjective affections of which we are cognizant in ourselves (secondary)." (Discussions, pp. 857, 858.) This is followed by another quotation to the effect, that primary qualities are apprehended as they are in bodies, secondary as in us; secundo primary as they are in bodies and as they are in us.

Mill remarks (Examination, p. 20): "There is nothing wonderful in Hamilton entertaining these opinions; they are held perhaps by the majority of metaphysicians. But it is surprising that, entertaining them, he

should have believed himself, and been believed by others, to maintain the relativity of all our knowledge. What he deems relative, in any sense of the term, not insignificant, is our knowledge of the secondary qualities; of the primary qualities he asserts a direct intuition." Here we would remark there is nothing either wonderful or surprising, unless we except the misunderstanding of Mill, which truly is surprising. Then follows a guessing as to what Hamilton means. "Is it the doctrine," says Mill, "that we know certain properties as they are in things," this seems to be the meaning; that being the case (Examination, p. 21) "still the question has to be answered whether the knowledge so acquired is of the objects as they are in themselves or only as they are relative to us." Here, we reply, Hamilton leaves no room for any such question. He advocated Natural Realism, and that is a sufficient answer. (Examination, p. 21.) Is it a knowledge merely "in its effects on us? or is it a knowledge of something in the thing ulterior to any effects on us? He asserts in the plainest terms that it is the latter: then it is not a knowledge wholly relative to us."

We submit that it is, and, even taking Mill's own *Relative to us*, which he uses down through the whole paragraph in the sense of relativity between the thing and the mind knowing, would ask, if it is not relative to us, to whom or what is it relative? If we have a knowledge of somewhat in the thing ulterior to any effects on us, seeing that it is a knowledge that *we* possess, that it is *our* knowledge, it must be knowledge standing under some one or other of the combination of space, time or self, the universal conditions of all know-

ledge ; and consequently must be relative, wholly relative. If it stand not under any of these, then it is not knowledge. Mill's use of Relative in the sense we have indicated we protest against ; and contend that if a doctrine is to be criticised, it should first, at least, be understood. Relativity between the thing and the mind knowing may be Mill's Relativity, but it certainly is not Hamilton's ; it is only a part of it. To continue : "If what we perceive and cognize is not merely a cause of our subjective impressions, but a *thing* possessing in its own nature and essence a long list of properties—extension, impenetrability, number, magnitude, figure, mobility, position—all perceived as essential attributes of the thing as objectively existing—all as modes of a not self (and that such is the case Hamilton asserts in every form of language, leaving no stone unturned to make us apprehend the breadth of the distinction), then I am willing to believe that such a thinker as Hamilton had a meaning, but I have no small difficulty in discovering what it is."

Here crops up the confusion which we took occasion to speak of, as peculiarly distinguishing Mill's Exposition of the Relativity. We do not perceive a *thing* possessing in its own nature and essence a long list of attributes, etc. The attributes, extension, etc., we *do* perceive, but the *thing* we know nothing of. A *thing* is not perceived as possessing these. A noumenal *thing* is *postulated* as being that in which these attributes *may* reside, but to talk of perceiving *it*, as Mill does, is to predicate perception of the noumenal ; is to say that all human knowledge is not phenomenal ; which is just another way of saying that our knowledge is a

knowledge of things *per se*, a doctrine which Mill might have known Hamilton repudiates.

After quoting a long passage (Hamilton's Lecture, Vol. I., pp. 136-138), the substance of which is that all our knowledge is of the phenomenal, Mill proceeds to say (Examination, p. 23): "Here is an exposition of the nature and limits of our knowledge which would have satisfied Hartley, Brown, and even Comte. It cannot be more explicitly laid down, that matter, as known to us, is but the incomprehensible and incognisable substraction of a bundle of sensible qualities, appearances, . . . that we know it only in its effects, that its very existence is only an inference we are compelled to make . . . A doctrine by the way, which under the name of Cosmothetical Idealism, is elsewhere the object of some of his most cutting attacks, etc."

Here, we remark, is another blunder of Mill, arising out of the same fruitful source we have already noted. We believe that the smallest competent intelligence would understand, that this maligned passage from Hamilton is purely and entirely applicable to the existence and cognizability of mind and matter *per se*. It has nothing to do with Cosmothetic Idealism. The question as to the reality and objectiveness of *phenomena*, whether these exist as mere ideas, *tertium quids*, versus undoubted material objective existences, is never once raised; and this we apprehend is the question at issue between the Natural Realist and the Cosmothetic Idealist. To speak of this passage as either implicitly or explicitly declaring a doctrine which in another portion of his work Hamilton "cuttingly attacks" under the name of Cosmothetic Idealism, is to betray such an



ignorance of what Cosmothetic Idealism is, as in the case of a person professing any acquaintance with Hamilton's Philosophy would most justly earn him a stinging rebuke; but when an "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," coming from the quarter it does, betrays such gross ignorance, our astonishment at the fact is only equalled by our wonder that Mill's misapprehension of Hamilton's doctrines, has so long passed unchallenged. Mill did not know what Cosmothetic Idealism was when he wrote his so-called "Examination."

But the chief argument running through the whole of Mill's treatment of the relativity, and which we shall now notice very shortly, is "Hamilton's doctrine, that all human knowledge is wholly relative is contradicted by the distinction which he makes between the primary and secondary qualities of matter." Quotation on this point is almost needless; but the following may be taken as a specimen (Examination, p. 24): "If it be true that extension, figure, etc., are known immediately in themselves and not like secondary (qualities), as they are in us; if it is these last that are unknown in themselves, and only inferred as causes to account for certain subjective affections *in ourselves*, while of the former we are immediately conscious as attributes of matter objectively existing, then our faculties, so far as the primary qualities are concerned, do cognize and know matter as it is in itself, and not merely as an unknown and incomprehensible substratum; they do cognize and know it as it exists absolutely, and not merely in relation to us. It is known to us directly and not as a mere reference from phenomena."

This passage is quite a model in its way of Mill's method of criticism. It contains not less than three misapprehensions. There is first the misapprehension more than once alluded to already. "If these things be so . . . we do cognize and know matter as it is in itself." This is precisely what Hamilton says noumena is; and again and again declares that it, to us, is utterly incognizable.

Again, there is here the gross assumption, that bodies and matter, as it is in itself, are synonymous expressions. Mill ought to have known better. There is also the same mistaken use of the meaning of the word Relative, *viz.*, a relation between the knowing and the known. Mill here, and throughout his whole criticism, never rises above this notion of Relative. If an object be known directly, presentatively, immediately, must it, therefore, be known absolutely and not merely in relation? Certainly not. This presentative immediate knowledge is relative: (1) because (Hamilton's Lectures, Vol. I, p. 148) existence is not cognizable absolutely in itself, but only in special modes (these modes we have hinted at); (2) because these modes can be known only if they stand in a certain relation to our faculties. But this, according to Mill, is tantamount to saying (Examination, p. 28) that "we do not know all about a thing, but only as much about it as we are capable of knowing;" and he continues, that whoever can find anything more in these statements than this, is more ingenious and more fortunate than himself.

We know something of Mill's ingenuity; his simplest, purest, and most proper acceptation of the Relativity for instance. We know something of his fortune also

in his strictures on Hamilton's Relativity: it is of the most unhappy description, so that to be more fortunate or more ingenious than Mill, in discovering only pitiable commonplace in Hamilton's Relativity, is not after all to be very ingenious or very fortunate. I shall not linger to prove that some of the weightiest and most momentous truths which civilized men possess are in some sense commonplace. This, I think, will suggest itself to every mind. Let us however get rid of this commonplace, this barren truism, this identical proposition, this relation between the knowing and the known, for this, Mill says, is Hamilton's Relativity (Examination, p. 6.) Have we now shaken off all Relativity? I think not, we have still left the special relativities which preserve the knowable from becoming the incognizable. Can the known exist out of relation to co-existence, sequence, duration, difference, or causation? These are the conditions under which the known *is* the known at all. Without these, it would cease to *be* the known, and become the unknown. So that, even granting Mill his own use of the meaning of the word *absolutely* (in and for itself, as it really is), they (our faculties) do cognize and know it (matter) as it exists, absolutely, and not merely as the reflected image of an utter object. But because we know it so, our knowledge is not the less relative, wholly relative; there yet remain not less than six conditions of relation, under three or more of which the known must fall.

Before bringing this weary tangle to a conclusion let me notice Hamilton's distinction between the qualities of matter, as these, it is said by Mill, are contradictory to any doctrine of the Relativity. "That Hamilton,

holding these," (Examination, p. 30) "did not hold any opinion, in virtue of which it could rationally be asserted that all human knowledge is relative."

As I understand Secondary qualities as expounded by Hamilton; they can neither be known, nor thought of, as apart from self; they cannot be perceived by more senses than one; they are mere affections of the sentient percipient, not qualities in the thing perceived. Heat is not in the fire, but in the hand that feels it, so with colour, taste, smell, &c.; these are feelings in the *me*, affection of the percipient, not qualities belonging to the thing perceived. These affections have a cause, but the sum of the conditions forming that cause does not lie *wholly*, though *largely*, in the being in whom the affections are felt. Some of the conditions of their existence (how many or what, are to us at present unknowable) *are* in the object perceived; but the sum-total of the affections, *qua* affections, exist in the person perceiving, and not in any imaginable existence which is *not* me. That condition or quote of conditions coming from *without* self, and co-operating with those in self, to form the secondary qualities or quality, I can only know, if I know at all, mediately, representatively, vicariously, *relatively*.

Primary qualities are thought of and are known as distinct from self. They present themselves to the percipient as qualities which *have* an existence out of *self*; and are in nowise dependent on self for their being or continuance. They may be and they *are* the cause of modes of self; but the fact which they chiefly proclaim even in this aspect *is*, not that they are mere subjective modes or affections, but that they are

objective realities, which are not only the cause of subjective states, modes, etc. in us, but are in themselves real and undoubted qualities which change not though we change. If then, in perception, there are certain elements which are permanent, while others change; and if I know that *my* own individual experience of the permanency of these qualities is corroborated by the universal testimony of all intelligencies like my own, I have thus a sure ground for believing that the qualities perceived are permanent realities presentatively, immediately known. Not, that I have a direct intuition of things *in themselves*; for then I should perceive them out of the special relations of Space and Time. All knowledge, all thought, must be known and thought of, under, space, time, and self or some combination of these, or they cease to be *entities* and become *nihil*. Impenetrability, mobility, extension, figure, size, density are *not in* the sentient precipient; they are *outside* of self; they affect self in a particular way, else self could never know them; but self they are *not*. The sensations and affections which these primary qualities may make on a cognizant intelligence are in me; but the qualities themselves are *not* there; they are outside of the intelligence, and are thought of and *known* as existing, even when the intelligence has passed beyond the sphere of their influence. The knowledge must thus be a cognizance of the qualities beyond any mere modes or states which they produce in self. We perceive them, not only as the cause of certain impressions on us, but in that fact is also given the clear and authentic accompanying facts, viz., that these qualities are independently existing; that they are

objective realities; and that we know them directly, presentatively, *relatively*. Not that we know the *thing* in which these qualities inhere; we know nothing of *that*. The *thing* to us is noumenal: we know only the phenomenal.

The Primary and Secondary qualities we know: the first as existing *out* of self, yet capable of affecting self; the second as largely existing *in* self, though some of their conditions are, and must be, out of self.

"Secundo-Primary." In his latter days Hamilton added to these a third class, which he called Secundo-Primary. Under this head he included such qualities as resistance, attraction, repulsion, etc. In these the external world is immediately apprehended (Dissertation, pp. 857, 858). "The primary are known immediately in themselves, the secundo-primary both immediately in themselves and mediately in their effects on us. The secondary only mediately in their effects on us. We are conscious as objects, in the primary qualities, of the modes of a not self; in the secondary, of the modes of a self; in the secundo-primary of the modes of self and of a not self at once." The qualities Primary and Secondary are at the opposite poles of objective knowledge, intermediate are the Secundo-Primary. In the Primary, intuition as a means of knowledge has reached its maximum, and sensation has dwindled to its minimum. In the Secondary, sensation as a means of knowledge has attained its maximum, and intuition its minimum. In the Secundo-Primary, intuition and sensation as means of objective knowledge are nearly equal to each other. In the Primary we have two or more of the senses

corroborating or modifying the testimony of another or others of the senses. The subjective affections (so far as the knowledge conveyed in them is concerned), which are awakened by the primary qualities, are of the most meagre and vacillating description. The mind must grasp, unite, examine, reject, *judge*, these faint subjective affections; faint as to the knowledge they bring, and it is only after a long process, rendered easy and swift by continual exercise, that it can do so. The human mind does not, all at once, attain the full possession and exercise of its faculties; there is a gradual unfolding of its powers and faculties; and this unfolding lies so far away, shrouded in the dim grey morning light of opening intelligence, that *it* has not unfrequently been the favourite resort of those who would build up mind and matter, either or both, from mere sensation and capability of sensation. In the primary qualities we have knowledge *not* derived *from* sensation, yet partly communicated *by* sensation. Such a quality, as extension for instance, is not composed of the sum of the sensations derived through the various senses, say touch and sight. It has its appropriate sensations truly, but it is not itself therefore a sensation; neither is it a bundle of sensations, which an intelligence holds together by a name. It is an actual quality not to be identified with the intelligence knowing, nor the sensations produced. It is a reality inherent in some outer thing, revealing itself to the mind by a true induction from the facts given in the subjective affection. We are conscious of knowing that quality not representatively but *presentatively*, not mediately but *immediately*; but know it *relatively* we must. Relatively, because

it is the knowledge of Relativities between existence, non-existence, and co-existence. Relatively, because it is a knowledge of the Relativities, existing between duration, succession, likeness, difference, and causation.

There is, therefore, no force whatever in that objection of Mill's to the Relativity, in which he declares that it is contradicted by Hamilton's qualities of matter; and with this objection there falls to the ground the whole battery of his criticism. J. S. Mill's criticism of the Relativity and the qualities of matter bear evidence that he understood neither the one nor the other. The whole of it is a gross blunder from beginning to end, arising out of a total misapprehension even of Hamilton's commonest doctrines. Mill expends a great deal of misdirected ingenuity professing to seek for the meaning of Hamilton, when the meaning lies on the surface and needs no seeking. In the most benighted ignorance he quotes Hamilton against Hamilton; but only succeeds in showing how utterly unable he is, either to appreciate, much less understand, the doctrines so sweepingly condemned. The truth is, Mill did not understand Metaphysics. He ought never to have left the realms of the practical and the concrete. From such a critic Hamilton's Philosophy has nothing to fear. Eclipsed, overshadowed it may be, by a more specious philosophy, but only for a time; it shall shine forth again with greater effulgence.

We are now in a position to state the great Law of Human Knowledge.

Sensation and intuition are the only means of human knowledge, and these are always *unitedly* present in every act in which knowledge is acquired.



When the intuitional element increases (for it is never absent), the sensational diminishes.

When the sensational increases, the intuitional diminishes.

We have already hinted at this in our sketch of the qualities of matter.

Here, we apprehend, in this great Law of Human Knowledge, now, we believe, for the first time, explicitly stated, and for which we alone are responsible, we have the means by which the two long opposed schools of philosophy, the Experiential and the Intuitional, shall ultimately be united. Both are true in what they affirm; both false in what they deny. With the one sense is everything and intuition nowhere; with the other, intuition, innate, connate, co-natal ideas, *a priori* beliefs, native forms of thought, are all in all, and sensation a corroborative secondary thing. Sensationalism in the hands of Hartley, Priestly, Condillac, the two Mills, G. H. Lewis, Bain, and the like (Hamilton, Art. Cousin) "exaggerating the too partial principles of Locke, had analysed all knowledge into sensation; reality and truth were limited to experience, and experience to the sphere of sense; while the very highest faculties of mind are deemed adequately explained when recalled to perceptions elaborated, sublimated, transformed—mind becoming a reflex of matter, thought a secretion of the brain."

Transcendentalism, in the Scottish and Germanic mind, bodying forth the truth that consciousness reveals phenomena which cannot be analysed into sense impressions, declares that "Intelligence (Art. Cousin) supposes principles which, as the *conditions* of its activity, cannot be

the result of its *operations*. Mind contains *knowledges* which, as primitive, universal, necessary, are not to be explained as generalizations from the contingent and individual, about which alone all experience is concerned. Across this great fact in consciousness, the united existence of intuition and sensation in every act in which knowledge is acquired, may the truthseeker in each field bear with him the trophies of thought and observation into the opposite fields bridged by this law; each no longer despising the labours of the other, shall conserve the intellect and vigour expended in warfare and debate, for longer and more fruitful flights of reason. Profiting by the stores of knowledge accumulated by both schools, the future philosopher shall rise to higher truths perhaps than we in our day have been able to attain, or saw only afar off. In each school we have the complement of the other, and in the "Law of Human Knowledge" we have their bond of union.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE UNCONDITIONED.

The doctrine of the Conditioned is a philosophy professing relative knowledge; but confessing absolute ignorance. (Hamilton's *Discussions*, p. 609.)

The Infinite and Absolute are unknowable, because inconceivable; and inconceivable, because the only notions we can have of them are purely negative.

The Infinite which I contemplate is considered only as in thought; the Infinite beyond thought being it may be an object of belief, but not of knowledge. (Hamilton.)

As long as we desire to comprehend and prove, we must assume for every object, ever a higher one, which conditions it. Where the chain of the Conditioned ceases, there cease also comprehension and proof. Unless we abandon demonstration, we reach no Infinite. (Jacobi.)

Our knowledge of the Infinite is real and positive, though only partial and indefinite (Professor Calderwood's *Philosophy of the Infinite*, p. 240.)

How far and in what way our fundamental, intellectual, and moral conceptions are rationally predicable of an Infinite being, is the unsolved problem of Metaphysics. (Professor Veitch, *Mind*, No. VI.)

In my remarks on that portion of Mill's *Examination* of Sir William Hamilton with which we have to do at present, I intend pursuing the following course. I shall first state the problem of "The Unconditioned," with the various solutions of it offered by Schelling, Kant, Cousin, and Sir William Hamilton; and shall then shortly consider a number of the arguments adduced by Hamilton in support of his opinion, and which have

been objected to by Mill; and then offer the opinion that in the Law of the Conditioned, coupled with Hamilton's distinction between knowledge and belief—faith in short—we have the solution, in embryo, at least of the problem of The Unconditioned.

What we have to do then is to state the question and examine the validity of Mill's objections.

The main purpose which mental science places before it, in Britain at least, is something quite different on the whole from that in which German philosophy delights to spend its strength. With us mental science, in the main, exhausts itself in psychology. We have a careful collocation and exposition of the various powers, faculties, and capacities of the human mind, from different view points, terminating in different goals. Our own philosophy, whether speculative or practical, plants itself in the midst of the phenomenal, arranging and generalizing, and out of it will not pass to the region of the transcendental. With German philosophy the case is different; *it* sets itself to the solution of such problems as relate to the nature and existence of God, the universe, and human will. The phenomenal of both worlds, the *ego* and the *non-ego*, are unstable, transient, relative, conditioned, not self-existent. It sets itself to find the stable, the permanent, the unrelated, the unconditioned, the self-existent, which underlies all the fleeting appearances of nature and human nature. It does not rest satisfied in a knowledge of what *is*, it seeks to know what *must* be. It aims at following up the whole originative scheme of the universe, through the eternal laws which govern it, to the uncreated causeless cause, the self-existent *One*. It is

necessary then, if we are to understand German speculation, that we lift our mind's eye from the relative and fasten it on the absolute; and thus, passing the barriers of the Finite and Conditioned, enter the domain of the Infinite, The Unconditioned.

There is no denying the fact that revelation cannot unfold for us this great cause; it simply postulates it. It does not profess to be an explication of the facts of the universe; we must turn our attention inwards, then towards the operations of our own being, and see if we may not there discover unmistakable evidence of an Infinite and Absolute. Can we reach the Absolute by faith, or by intuition, or by reason?

This brings us to the solutions offered, which we can do no more than state—

(1.) Schelling's.—The Absolute cannot be comprehended in consciousness and reflection, but it *can* be gazed upon by a higher faculty, intuition.

(2.) Kant's.—The Absolute, though not an object of real knowledge, yet exists subjectively within our consciousness as a regulative principle.

(3.) Cousin's.—The Absolute *can* be grasped by reason, and brought within the compass of our real consciousness.

(4.) Hamilton's.—The Absolute is altogether inconceivable, every notion we have of it being simply a negative of that which characterises finite and conditioned existence.

It is with this last we have to do, and as the fullest exposition of it (though not all) occurs in his critique of Cousin's Philosophy, which Mill has made the ground of his attack, we must endeavour fairly to state the

antagonistic doctrines of the two philosophers (Cousin and Hamilton); but as Mill's criticism amounts to little else than a negation at large, we are happily freed from any other necessity than that of stating his objections and letting them annihilate themselves.

The point at issue between Hamilton and Cousin may be found in *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1829, under an article entitled "Philosophy of the Unconditioned." After a brief and masterly review of the position of philosophy, followed by an exposition of the philosophy of M. Cousin, whom he styles the apostle of Rationalism in France, Hamilton says: "Now it is manifest that the whole doctrine of Cousin is involved in the proposition that The Unconditioned, The Absolute, The Infinite, *is* immediately known in consciousness, and this by difference, plurality, and relation."

To disprove this proposition is the task Hamilton sets before him in the article above referred to. "The Unconditioned, as an element of knowledge (says Hamilton), is the generative principle of his (Cousin's) system, but common to him with others, whereas the mode by which the possibility of this knowledge is explained affords its discriminating peculiarity." The other positions of his theory may indeed (as deduced from this assumption) be disputed, even if the antecedent be allowed, "but this assumption disproved every consequent in his theory is therewith annihilated."

(Cousin's Doctrine of The Unconditioned.)—It is cognisable and conceivable by consciousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality.

(Hamilton's Doctrine of The Unconditioned.)—It is incognizable and inconceivable, its notion being only

negative of The Conditioned, which last can only be positively known or conceived.

This doctrine of Hamilton's is not by any means of such a nature that its meaning may be gathered up from a first hearing. It is perhaps to be regretted that Hamilton did not further illustrate the terms used in the controversy. We must, however, with what materials we have at hand, get to an understanding of it.

(What is The Unconditioned ?)—We will have a better apprehension of The *Unconditioned* if we state his law of The *Conditioned*.

All that is conceivable in thought lies between two contradictory extremes, neither of which is conceivable, but *of* which *one* must be true, and the other false.

(Dissertations on Reid, p. 911.)—"All positive thought lies between two extremes, neither of which we can conceive as possible, and yet as mutual contradictories, the one or the other we must recognize as necessary, and it is from this impotence of thought, that we are unable to think anything as absolute, even absolute relativity is unthinkable." (Logic, Lecture III, p. 100.) "We have a positive concept of a thing when we think of it by the qualities of which *it* is the complement."

The instances he gives of the operations of the Law of the Conditioned are the following—

(1) Space either is, or is not, absolutely bounded; neither alternative is conceivable, but one must be true.

(2) Space either is, or is not, infinitely divisible; neither conceivable: one true.

(3) Time, stretching from the present either way, is boundless, or it is not; neither conceivable: one true.

(4) Time either is, or is not, infinitely divisible; both inconceivable.

All that is knowable then lies between two contradictories. This knowable *is called the Conditioned*; the contradictories between which *it lies are called the Unconditioned*.

All that comes within the sphere of knowledge or belief may be divided into two genera—

I. The Conditioned is that which can positively be conceived.

II. The Unconditioned is a name for that which transcends the laws of thought.

The I, is positive, phenomenal, relative, real, and true as far as it goes, whether derived from experience or intuition.

The II, is negative, noumenal, unrelated, and unreal as an element of human knowledge. It is a mere negation of some known fact in consciousness. It has a *subjective* existence, purely negative, in itself is incognizable and inconceivable; even that subjective existence, such as it is, would instantly cease, whenever the positive concept, of which it is the negation, passed out of consciousness.

I. The Conditioned is that which is subject to laws, and has qualities.

II. The Unconditioned is that which is subject to no law, and has no attributes.

Under the genus Unconditioned, there fall to be considered the two following species—

1st, the Infinite; 2nd, The Absolute.

1st, the Infinite, is the unconditionally *unlimited*; the unconditional negation of limitation, the *unfinish-*



*able*;—that which is subject to no law, and has neither limits nor qualities.

What do we make of God then in our definition of the Infinite? Our concern at present is not with an *Infinite Being*, but with a subjective negation obtained by thinking away all positive elements of knowledge from a thing, or a being, or a quality. This Infinite can never exist in any other form than that of an abstraction: it has no concrete existence, it is in itself utterly, positively unthinkable.

2nd, the Absolute, is the unconditionally *limited*; the unconditional affirmation of limitation, the *finished*;—that which *has* limits, but is subject to no law, and has no attributes.

Like the Infinite, it is a mere subjective negation; unlike it, however, in being limited *unconditionally*.

(Hamilton's Discussions, p. 21, *note*.)—The Infinite and the Absolute "are only the names of two counter-imbecilities of the human mind, transmuted into properties of the nature of things, of two subjective negations converted into objective affirmations. We tire ourselves in adding to, or taking from. Some more reasonably call the thing unfinishable, *Infinite*; others, less rationally call it finished, *Absolute*; but in both cases the *metastatis* is in itself irrational—not however in the highest degree, for the subjective contradictions were not at first objectified by the same philosophers; and it is the crowning irrationality of the Infinite-Absolutionists, that they have not merely accepted as objective what is only subjective, but quietly assumed as the same what is not only different, but conflicting—not only conflicting, but repugnant."

This then, very imperfectly stated, is The Unconditioned; and Hamilton says, it is the generative principle of Cousin's Philosophy.

Let us now see how Cousin applied this Unconditioned in his explication of the fact of consciousness.

(Hamilton, Article, Philosophy of Conditioned, p. 9.)—In every act of consciousness we distinguish a self, or *ego*; and something different from self, a *non-ego*; each limited and modified by the other. These *together* constitute the finite element. But at the same time that we are conscious of these existences—plural, relative, and contingent,—we are conscious likewise of a superior unity in which they are contained; and by which they are explained—a unity, absolute as they are conditioned, substantiative as they are phenomenal, and an infinite cause as they are finite causes. This unity is God. The fact of consciousness is thus a complex phenomena comprehending three several terms:—

“1st.—The idea of the *ego* and *non-ego* as finite.

“2nd.—The idea of something else infinite.

“3rd.—The idea of the relation of this finite element to the infinite. These elements are revealed in themselves and in their mutual connection in every act of primitive consciousness.”

Hamilton takes exception to this; denies that consciousness is a complex phenomena (see Philosophy of Perception), and maintains that it is ultimate, primitive, indivisible. He holds with Cousin, that an *ego* and a *non-ego* are given in consciousness, not however that they constitute consciousness or are any part of it. Space, time, and self, the three elements

of the positive—the thinkable—are given in consciousness and none other. He thus denies, that an absolute unity, a substantative reality, an infinite cause, is present in every act of consciousness, is in short a part of consciousness at all. Denying this, he of course did not proceed to prove that this *non-existence* was or was not God. Nowhere do we find Hamilton identifying the absolute cause, the infinite, the substantative unity, identity, pure thought, etc., which *He* called the Unconditioned, with that Being whom men clothe with attributes and worship; he simply denies the existence of any such element in consciousness as a *positive concept*; all that men do *know* or can *know* is—the Conditioned, the Limited, the conditionably Limited. The Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Infinite is incognizable, and inconceivable, because “to think is to condition.” If the Unconditioned *be* an element of consciousness, or given in consciousness, it will be time enough then to consider whether this Unconditioned *be* God. If, however, there is no Unconditioned in consciousness, if all that is thinkable is Conditioned, then a unity which Cousin calls God cannot be given in consciousness along with an *ego* and a *non-ego*, a plural and different (Philosophy of Conditioned, p. 12). “The other positions of his (Cousin’s) theory, as deduced from this assumption, may indeed be disputed even if the antecedent be allowed; but this assumption disproved every consequent in his theory is therewith annihilated.” And in the succeeding pages of the article, the assumption is disproved.

It is altogether a mistake on Mill’s part to suppose that the question really at issue in Hamilton’s “striking



and celebrated review" is, have we or have we not "an immediate intuition of God" (Mill's Examination, p. 32). While admitting that this question was involved in Cousin's theory, and would have naturally fallen to have been discussed on the establishment of his first assumption, there is nevertheless no doubt whatever, that the question, as Mill puts it, was *not* the one really at issue; in fact, is *not* the question discussed by Hamilton at all. The immediate question at issue, the decision of which in the negative, rendered a further consideration of Cousin's other positions unnecessary, was, have we the Unconditioned given as a positive fact of consciousness? If Mill chooses to consider the Philosophy of the Conditioned, a mere question of, have we or have we not an immediate intuitive knowledge of God, then "Hamilton's celebrated and striking review" may be made to look very like celebrated and striking nonsense, but the nonsense is not Hamilton's.

It must not, however, for a moment be imagined that Hamilton's doctrine of the Unconditioned wipes God out of the universe. In the body *know* Him we cannot; but believe in Him, hope in Him, live in Him, we must, for we are all born in faith. This, however, will be more apparent when we come to consider that portion of Mill's criticism which has relation to Belief and Knowledge. Mill, then, begins his criticism in total misapprehension of the question discussed; and he has not proceeded far until his "Examination" furnishes abundant evidence of this.

(Examination, p. 42.)—"In reviewing the series of arguments adduced by Hamilton for the incognizability and inconceivability of the Absolute, the first remark

that occurs is, that most of them lose their application by simply substituting for the metaphysical abstraction the Absolute, the more intelligent concrete expression, something absolute. If the first phrase has any meaning, it must be capable of being expressed in terms of the other. When we are told of an Absolute in the abstract, or of an Absolute being, even though called God, we are entitled, and if we would know what we are talking about, are bound to ask, Absolute in what? (Examination, p. 43.) To take any example from the region of thought to which the controversy belongs, when the true or beautiful is spoken of, the phrase is meant to include all things whatever that are beautiful."

The question which Mill says we are bound to ask is, because of the terms of the controversy inadmissible and his illustration is an unhappy one. It is inadmissible, because the Absolute under discussion has never been proved to have a positive existence, in fact, has been shown to be a nonentity. When it has become fair and reasonable to insist, that non-entities shall be considered entities to serve the purposes of a partizan in a philosophical discussion, then the question may in strictest justice be asked, but not till then. Mill's illustration is an unhappy one. We submit that the phrase, true and beautiful, is used to express that *idea* of the true and beautiful which is part of our humanity, and which mankind seek to embody or find embodied in Nature, Humanity, and God. Absolute beauty is the basis of all art; and an *unattainable idea* of good is the basis of all morality and justice, and lies very near the heart of all religious systems that have had any permanent influence on mankind. (See also Professor

Veitch, Lucretius, pp. 92, 93.)\* Consider the true and beautiful *out of relation*, that is, place it in the same category as Hamilton places the Unconditioned, and the answer to the question, Absolute in what? True in what? Beautiful in what? is—Absolute in being absolute; true in being true; beautiful in being beautiful.

The same objection is made by Mill to the use of the term Infinite. He contends that it is a phrase of no *meaning, unless* in reference to some particular predicate (Examination, p. 44). "It must be infinite in something, as in size, duration, or in power. These are intelligible conceptions. But an abstract infinite must be, not only infinite in greatness, but also in littleness; its duration infinitely long and infinitely short, infinitely awful, infinitely contemptible. It is in the same mass of contradiction as its companion the absolute."

It is quite evident from these quotations that Mill misunderstands the conditions of the subject discussed. Whoever understands anything intelligently of the "celebrated and striking review" of Cousin's Philosophy, surely does not need to be reminded that the three ideas, which Cousin says are the foundation of consciousness, the regulative elements of intelligence or reason, are—

(1) A finite, a relative, a phenomenal element made up of a self and a non-self.

(2) An infinite, an absolute, a unity, a noumenal fact.

(3) The idea of the relation of the finite element to the infinite.

By demanding that the Infinite, the Absolute shall be

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\* Lucretius and the Atomic Theory: Glasgow, Maclehose.

considered as an Infinite, an Absolute something. Mill is demanding that the second element of the three, which form the basis of Cousin's consciousness, and is the generative principle of his philosophy, shall be struck out, and the question dealt with without it, then of course if the second be taken away, the third goes with it. The blunder is so palpable, the wonder is that it has escaped notice so long. (Examination, p. 45.) "It is these unmeaning abstractions however—this muddle of self-contradiction—which alone our author (Hamilton) has proved against Cousin and others, to be unknowable." Just what he intended proving, and what the conditions of the question behoved him to prove. "He has not shown that we cannot know a *concrete reality* as *infinite* or as *absolute*. Applied to this latter thesis, his reasoning breaks down." Of course it does, and so will any reasoning on such a thesis, as long as human reason continues such as it is. To talk of knowing the *concrete as abstract*, is about as sapient as knowing that 2 and 2 make 5.

There are thus then two mistakes underlying all Mill's criticisms of Hamilton's review of Cousin's Philosophy—

- (1) A mistake as to the immediate question at issue.
- (2) A mistake as to the conditions of the question discussed.

Criticisms proceeding in ignorance such as this cannot be estimated at a very high value.

There are four arguments against the knowableness of the Unconditioned, to all of which Mill takes exception; and as we believe that Hamilton is right and Mill wrong

—totally wrong—we now purpose unfolding those arguments, and defending them as well as may be from the adverse criticisms of Mill.

(1) The Infinite and Absolute are unknowable because inconceivable, and inconceivable because the only notions we can have of them are purely negative.

(2) The Unconditioned is unknowable, because it includes both the Infinite and the Absolute.

(3) The conditions under which alone Cousin allows intelligence to be possible, necessarily exclude the knowledge, not to say, a concept of the Absolute.

(4) We cannot know the Absolute as an absolute cause. A cause is a relative; and what exists absolutely as a cause, exists absolutely under relation.

With regard to the first, then, Mill says (*Examination*, p. 45): "If he is right in his antecedent, his consequent follows: and conception made up of negations is a conception of nothing. It is not a conception at all."

(*Discussions*, p. 17)—"Kant has clearly shown that the idea of the Unconditioned can have no objective reality. (*Discussions*, p. 13)—"In our opinion the mind can conceive and consequently can know only the limited and the conditionally limited." (*Discussion*, p. 28)—Hamilton says, in substance, that the idea of the infinite and absolute and the idea of the finite are not equally real; because the notion of the one necessarily suggests the notion of the other. The concept of a thing by what it is (its positive notion) suggests the concept of the thing by what it is not (its negative notion); but the one contradictory is but the negative of the other, that which it is not. The conceivable has its corresponding negation, the inconceivable;



but though the one suggest the other, the positive alone is real; the negative is but an abstraction of thought itself. The infinite and absolute indeed suggest the finite, and the latter the former; but only as an affirmation or negation of the same.

(Examination, p. 45.)—Mill asks the question “but is conception by the fact of its being a conception of something infinite reduced to a negation?” This he admits is true of the senseless (as he calls it) abstraction *the infinite*. But in place of the infinite he says, give us *something* infinite, and the argument collapses. “Infinite space for instance; is there nothing positive in that?” “The negative part of this concept is absence of bounds; the positive, are the idea of space, and of space greater than any finite space. So of infinitive duration.”

Here, we think, Mill, as usual, has failed to feel the force of Hamilton's meaning. Mill holds that there is a positive element in the idea of infinite space and infinite duration, and that, *that* positive element is space, space greater than any finite space; time, time longer than any given time. The negative part of these concepts, he says, is the absence of bounds. What Mill demands is, that the idea of space which the mind has as an objective application, that is space *with bounds*, space subject to conditions, be thought of as space *without* bounds, space subject to *no conditions*. Hamilton has no fault to find with this negation as a *negation*. Such an idea *is* in the mind *not* as the subjective affirmation of something objective existing; but as a subjective negation, the opposite of the possible, the impossible, the unknowable, because inconceivable. Not that there is not in the mind

a vague notion of all contradictories; in the mind they are, else how could we speak of them? The one suggests the other; but the positive only is real; the suggested opposites are merely negations of the known. They are inconceivable, hence unknowable, as other than barren negations. They cannot be pictured to the imagination in any possible way, *so as to add one item*, or the faintest scrap of a shadow of real knowledge to that which is already known as the positive. They can neither be realized as possible, nor understood as other than nonentities. The only idea that can be conceived and known *id est* realized as possible and understood as existing is the *positive* opposite. Here only we find knowledge, there nonentity.

Mill (Examination, p. 46) admits that we cannot have an adequate conception of space or duration as infinite. "But between a conception, which though inadequate, is real and correct as far as it goes, and the impossibility of every conception, there is a wide difference. Hamilton does not admit this difference. Hamilton *does* admit this difference. What is his doctrine of the Relativity but an assertion of the inadequacy, yet reality of all phenomenal knowledge? He does not find fault with our finite concepts, but teaches, that for all human purposes they are as genuine and good positive concepts as humanity need ask for. In all that is unconditioned he denies, not only inadequacy but knowledge of any kind (Lecture, II., p. 375). "To say (says Hamilton) that the infinite can be thought, but only inadequately thought, is a contradiction *in adjecto*." It is the same as saying

"that the infinite can be known, but only known as finite." I answer, says Mill (Examination, p. 46) "that to know it as greater than anything finite is not to know as finite." This, it seems to me, is an evidence unmistakeable, that the plainest statements of Hamilton are by Mill utterly uncomprehended. Hamilton does not deny, but on the contrary most unmistakeably asserts, again and again, that the positive implies the negative, the conditioned the unconditioned; but the latter of the two contradictories exist as the suggested contradiction of the phenomenal, the negative of the known and phenomenal positive. It has no subjective affirmation, nor has it any objective application. I must confess that I cannot see any difference between Mill's positive and negative element in *his* idea of infinite space and infinite duration. What is the difference between space greater than any finite space, time longer than any given time? These surely are infinite; and as for space without bounds that is infinite space. Time without end, that is infinite time. Space greater than any finite space, if Mill calls this positive, then I submit, that "space without bounds" must also be called positive. The two are not even contraries, they are not opposed to each other, they are identical. If the latter be negative, so must the former, and the whole idea is thus a mere negation of the finite; having in it no new element of knowledge, being in reality nothing beyond the vague unknowable negation, which the imagination may suggest by means of the positive elements of the finite, the possible, the positive; that which *has* a subjective affirmation

and an objective application, Mill's positive and negative elements must either be both the *one* or both the *other*. If both are positive, then *infinite* is just another name for *finite*, the idea expressed by both terms is the same; and men have been labouring under a huge mistake who thought there was any difference; John Stuart Mill among the rest. If both are negative, Mill's arguments fall to the ground worse than useless.

Hamilton's first argument then against the knowableness of the Unconditions, viz., the Unconditioned is unknowable, because inconceivable, I hold has been made good. We must take care, however, not to get *stultified* with the different meanings of "conceivable," which Mill, in some of the most flagrantly mistaken pages of his book, lays to the charge of Hamilton. Reid noted two senses in which Conceive is used: Conceive, imagine, apprehend, says Reid, has two meanings.

(1) It means the expression of a simple apprehension implying no judgment; simple apprehension.

(2) It implies the expression of a judgment or opinion; simple judgment.

With these meanings of Conceive Mill concurs; but he says, Hamilton has introduced a third meaning without saying so; and that he intermingles them for the purposes of his argument, giving no intimation when he uses the word in one or other of the senses.

The senses 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, gliding back to 1st, which Mill indicates in notes, are palpable blunders; but even were they verities they in no way invalidate the argument. Conceive, in our opinion, is used in a much greater number of senses than Mill seemed to be aware of. It is (first) used in an acceptation as wide as the term's "Thought,"

“Thinking.” and “Think” are themselves employed. It is (second) also used with as wide a meaning as “Fancy,” “Imagination,” and “Picturing” to the mind are used. It is (third) likewise employed in the sense of “Construing” to the mind, “Realizing” as possible. It is (fourth) frequently used in the sense of “Comprehending” as possible; and (fifth) when the imagination or representative faculty holds up in consciousness a picture of the facts of sensation and intuition (for they are never divorced from each other in what is thinkable), and the understanding combines and generalises the same, we are exercising conception, we are conceiving, we have a concept. This, we apprehend, is the true meaning of Conceive, and if it is to be used in any other—if, like the term “Idea,” it is to be employed as everything by turns and nothing long, as Locke and others since his day have used it—then the sooner it drops out of the nomenclature of Philosophy the better. We have at present neither the time nor the inclination either to expand, illustrate, or defend these variations of Conceive. What we have to say is, that with any possible meaning attachable to the word Conceive, allowable or disallowable, the argument of Hamilton remains impregnable.

The second argument attacked by Mill “The Unconditioned is unknowable, because it includes both the Infinite and the Absolute,” we consider equally secure. This argument is levelled against all philosophers (and Cousin was one of the number) who confound the Infinite and the Absolute; and treat the Unconditioned as an *indivisible* and *positive* notion.

The Unconditioned is a *genus* including two well-marked contradictory species, viz., the Infinite and the

Absolute (the Unfinishable and the Finished) both, of which *cannot*, but one *must*, be true. Cousin, who held the knowableness of the Unconditioned, was bound to prove the unity of that notion with the Infinite or with the Absolute—with either to the exclusion of the other (Discussions, p. 28).

This he did not do for two reasons : (1) the elements of which the supposed unity of the Unconditioned are made up are contradictories and cannot subside into a unity having a subjective affirmation and an objective application ; (2) he (Cousin) confounded the Infinite and the Absolute, either of which is inconsistent with the other ; and did not apprehend the necessity of attempting their reconciliation (Discussions, p. 31). "The Unconditioned is not a positive concept, nor has it even a real or intrinsic unity ; for it only combines the Infinite and the Absolute, in themselves contradictory of each other, into a unity *relative to us*, by the *negative* bond of their inconceivability. It is on this mistake of the relative for the irrelative, of the negative for the positive, that Cousin's theory is founded. This reduction of Cousin's two ideas of the Infinite and Absolute to one *positive* conception and its negative, implicitly annihilates also the third idea."

Hamilton does not (as Mill seems to imagine) labour to prove the contradictoriness of the notion of a *Being*, Infinite in some attributes and Absolute in others (Mill's Examination, p. 48). He entertains no such supposition ; he neither affirms nor denies it. Mill's objection, therefore, to this argument is quite beside the question ; has no relation to that part of Cousin's Philosophy criticised by Hamilton ; is, like the rest of his criticism, quite a mistake.

The third argument fares no better in Mill's hands.

"The conditions under which alone Cousin allows intelligence to be possible, necessarily exclude the knowledge, not to say a concept, of the absolute."

The substance of Hamilton's argument is as follows: Cousin admits that knowledge, intelligence, comprehension is—a variety, a plurality, a difference. He further admits that the absolute as known and as existing are identical; and that *that* Absolute is an absolute negation of all plurality and difference. Intelligence, knowledge, comprehension, which is plural, cannot be identified with that which is not plural, not various, not many, not standing in relation. *If* known, the Absolute *as known* must be known as different from the Absolute *as existing, id est*, an Absolute is known which is not an absolute. Or again, allowing the non-identity of knowledge and existence, "the Absolute as known must be known under the conditions of the Absolute as existing, *id est*, as *Absolute Unity*; but the conditions of intelligence as knowing are plurality and difference, therefore the condition of the Absolute as existing and under which it must be known, and the condition of intelligence, are incompatible. For if one suppose the Absolute cognizable, it must be identified either with—

(1) The subject known. (2) The object known.

(3) Indifference of both.

The first and third are contradictory of the Absolute, for in each it is asserted that the Absolute is known as Absolute Unity, *id est*, as the negation of "all plurality, while the very act by which it is known, affirms plurality as the condition of its possibility."

"The third is a contradictory of the plurality of *intelli-*

gence, for if the subject and object of consciousness be known as *one*, a plurality of terms is not the necessary condition of intelligence. Either the Absolute cannot be conceived at all, or Cousin is wrong in subjecting thought to the conditions of plurality and differences."

Here again Mill is in a *Scotch mist*. The plurality, the difference maintained by Cousin, is *not* a plurality, a difference between an *ego* and a greater or less *multiplicity* of *non-egos*. Yet this is the plurality which he chooses to consider (Examination, p. 49) in his strictures on Hamilton. With this plurality (Mill's) Hamilton has no feud; this plurality he agrees to—"cordially agrees to," but this is not Cousin's plurality. His plurality is made up of two facts, which, he says, are given in consciousness, and these are, the One or the Infinite, and the Many or the Finite; the latter, of course, made up of a self and a non-self combining to form one factor. A mistake of this kind renders anything Mill has to say on this point something worse than irrelevant.

The concluding objection of Hamilton to any knowledge of the Absolute may be stated in a few words.

(4) To say that we know the Absolute as an absolute cause, is to say that we know it as a relation, *id est*, not as Absolute at all. The idea of a cause is irreconcilable with the Absolute; for a cause is relative and implies an effect; this Absolute is not an absolute. "Here (Mill's Examination, p. 50) surely is one of the most unexpected slips in logic ever made by an experienced logician."

There is a slip, but it is made by Mill, not Hamilton. He goes on further to state, that, at the beginning of the Discussion, three meanings of Absolute were noted; and



that two of these were, by Hamilton, discriminated with precision. Of these, Mill says, he thought, the one under discussion was that of finished, perfected, completed. Hamilton says, that for himself it is the one he exclusively employs, but now, says Mill, this meaning is dropped and another substituted. "If Absolute means finished, perfected, completed, may there not be a finished, perfected, completed cause, *id est*, the most a cause it is possible to be, the cause of everything except itself? Has Hamilton shown that an Absolute cause thus understood is inconceivable or unknowable? No, all he shows is, that though absolute in the only sense relevant to the question, it is not absolute in another and a totally different sense; since, what is known as a cause is known relatively to something else, viz. to its effects; and that such knowledge of God, is not of God in himself, but of God in relation to his works." The doctrine of Cousin (Mill's Examination, p. 51) is too legitimate a product of the metaphysics of both philosophers to be capable of being refuted by Hamilton; and further, the principles common to both are as good a warrant for Cousin to say that a knowledge of God in and by His effects *is* knowing Him as he is in himself; as for Hamilton maintaining that extension and figure are of the essence of matter and perceived as such by intuition."

Let us look for a little at Mill's three meanings of Absolute, which he says he noted at the beginning of the Discussion. Note in passing his definition of Infinite, "That to the magnitude of which there is no limit." This we suspect is no definition of Infinite, or at best a lame one. It is, however, a very good definition of *Indefinite*.

Mills three Absolutes are—

(1) Absolute in the relation to which it stands to Infinite, means that which is finished, completed. In this sense the relation between the Absolute and Infinite is a tolerably close one, viz., a relation of contrariety.

(2) Absolute the opposite of relative.

(3) That which is independent of everything else which exists and is what it is by its own nature, and not because of anything. In this third sense Absolute stands for the negation of relation, not now of relation in general but of the specific relation of Cause and Effect.

Shortly, then, Mill's three Absolutes are these—

(1) Absolute = the contrary of Infinite that to the magnitude of which there *is* a *limit*, that which is finished, completed.

(2) Absolute = the negation of relation in general.

(3) Absolute = the negation of that specific relation expressed by Cause and Effect.

These meanings of Absolute, we hold, are a bad—a wretchedly bad—paraphrase of Hamilton's definitions. The thing is so palpable, quotation is needless. The third is the only original one, and we cannot conceive how it is introduced at all in the form that it is, unless it be for the purpose of using it against Hamilton in his objection to Cousin's definition of Absolute as an absolute cause, thus quietly assuming the point to be established. We do not demur; we heartily admit the right of parties in a discussion using any term in any meaning they may think proper, provided we are told of it, for then only we know what they are talking about. We do not pledge ourselves to adopt these mean-

ings; we reserve the right of passing judgment and modifying, adopting, or discarding. We hold then, however admirable Mill's three Absolutes may be for *his* purpose, they are quite inadmissible in the present discussion. They are not consistent. The third one, *id est*, his own (the others being Hamilton's), is a redundancy, and must be lopped off.

If Absolute be—

(1) The negation or contrary of Infinite,

(2) The negation of *all* relation,

where is the need of a third Absolute which shall be the negation of any specific relation, even though that relation be known under the name of Cause and Effect? Why single out one relation more than any other? Why not have as many Absolutes as there are relations? Such Absolutes can have no footing either in reason or in common sense. Mill's third Absolute is quite well accounted for in his second, is in fact included in it, and carries its own death-warrant with it. It is true we can speak of an absolute cause,—*id est*, the most a cause it is possible to be,—just as we can speak of an absolute fool,—*id est*, the most a fool it is possible to be; and so with a thousand other relations. But in all of these, Absolute has the *same* meaning, there is no new shade of meaning introduced; the meaning is identical through, and that meaning Mill has already specified in his second Absolute. There remains but two Absolutes to Mill, and these we have said are wretchedly bad paraphrases of Hamilton's Absolutes, which may be summarised as follows—

(1) Absolute is that which is out of relation as finished, perfected, completed, total. It is diametrically opposed to, is contradictory of, the Infinite.

(2) Absolute, simply, simpliciter,—*id est*, considered in and for itself, considered out of relation.

It is in the first of these senses that Hamilton used absolute, and he *says so*; it is in the second that Mill *thinks* he uses it, and consequently labours in grievous error.

We cannot know the Absolute then as an absolute cause, for a thing existing absolutely,—*id est*, out of relation,—and a thing existing absolutely as a cause, is a contradiction. The one is the total negation of all relation, the other the positive affirmation of a specific relation. Not only is an Absolute cause relative, and therefore transient; it does not even exist for itself; it is not final in itself; it is not perfect in itself; its perfectability is only completed in its effect; its effect is greater than itself; considered abstractly, at least it is dependent on its effect for its reality.

The concluding criticism of Mill on "To think is to condition" is sufficiently answered by the late Professor Mansel. If the mind imposes its own forms on its objects in every act of thought, "to think is to condition" and the Unconditioned is unthinkable.

In bringing to a close our hasty and imperfect sketch of this topic, we cannot refrain from saying that Mill has not only failed to disturb Hamilton's position, viz., "the Absolute is altogether inconceivable, every notion we have of it being simply a negation of that which characterizes finite and conditioned existence," but he has also failed to leave the question in any better condition than that in which he found it; and throughout we have, I think, abundant evidence of his total misapprehension of the Philosopher whom he cuttingly attacks, and, as a consequence, of his utter untrustworthiness as a critic of that Philosopher.

## CHAPTER III.

### BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for: the evidence of things not seen. (St. Paul.)

Faith is the acknowledgment that a thing is so because it is true. (Swedenborg.)

But such feeling of certainty as depends not on reasons of the understanding, is belief. (*Jacobi*.)

Faith is belief not resolvable into sight or reason. (J. H. Newman.)

I propose to restrict the term belief to the assent to propositions, and demarcate it from those inferences which are made in the presence of objects and have reference to them. We *believe* in the proposition 'fire burns,' but *know* the fact, that paper about to be thrust into the flame will ignite. (G. H. Lewis.)

To *believe* is to admit a thing as true on grounds sufficient *subjectively*, insufficient objectively. (Kant.)

The sphere of our belief is much more extensive than the sphere of our knowledge. When I deny that the Infinite can by us be *known*, I am far from denying that by us it must and ought to be *believed*. (Hamilton.)

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,  
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge,  
How little do we *know* that which we are !  
How less what we may be !

BYRON.

Yet hath the soul a dower natural ;  
And sparks of light, some common things to see.  
Sir JOHN DAVIES.  
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :  
The *soul* that rises with us our life's star  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,  
From God, who is our home.

WORDSWORTH.

And I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless. (St. Paul.)

THE three-fold nature of Man—body, soul, and spirit—seems altogether to have been lost sight of in recent metaphysical discussions, and notably in the discussion of the Unconditioned.

Modern Experientialists see nothing in man but a curious and unique bundle, deftly knit together, of muscle, bone, viscera, and nerves; subject to laws—chemical, physiological, and mechanical.

Sensation and experience are the only sources of knowledge. Man, considered in relation to space, time, and the universe, is a mere recipient of sensation, a bundle of sensations; the thinking part of him is described as a “possibility of feeling.”

“On Earth there is nothing great but man:  
In man there is nothing great but mind.”

This is the language of Natural Realists and others, who accept the testimony of consciousness and our faculties in general. Man has intuitions and beliefs given in consciousness, which experience never taught him, which no combination of *sense* and *feeling* could create. Sensation and experience are the occasions which wake up and call forth these dormant latentcies that distinguish *mind* from mere *matter*.

Mystics weary of the round of Metaphysical speculation and discussion, intrench themselves in man’s religious

nature, and speak with the style and language of prophets and seers.

It is obvious that any attempt to construe nature, and human nature, on any one or two of these lines exclusively must end in disaster and defeat.

Man is a tripartite creature. His physical nature, his body, brings him in contact, through the "five gateways of knowledge," with the material universe; but it can do no more. It holds ajar the door through which are seen the physical realities of a physical world; and (in sensation) calls aloud on the mind, the soul, the intellectual, the thinking part of him, to look and learn. This is all the *body* can do. It can only tell us of the physical, the tangible, the material, the extended, the ponderable, the measurable, nothing more. With this, its functions cease. It, the material, can only speak to us *of* the material.

The soul—the mind—is the thinking part of man's nature, which brings him in contact and communion with intelligencies like his own. The soul takes up the body's sensations—transmutes them into percepts and concepts—treasures them up in memory and consciousness—recalls them at will—associates them together, so that, when one is recalled, others present themselves—holds them up to the contemplation of the mind—compares, judges, reasons, elaborates; in short, transmutes the material and physical, provided by the body, into the immaterial and the psychical thought.

The soul—the intellectual—can speak to us *of* the intellectual only: the reasonable, the deducible, the *knowable*. But man's nature does not end here; body and soul bring together the phenomenal and the intui-

tional awakened by the phenomenal, and draped in it, from the physical and the intellectual universe. Man's spiritual nature brings him in contact with the spiritual. In the region of the spiritual, conscience sets up her throne,

“The impartial judge of right and wrong.”

As widely as thought differs from sensation, as widely as the intellectual differs from the physical, so differs the spiritual from the intellectual, the moral aspect of thought, from the thought itself.

Through the senses there streams into the soul a knowledge of the physical; through the soul there comes to man a knowledge of the intellectual, a possibility of communion with created intelligences like his own. Through the spiritual, there comes a knowledge of the spiritual, a possibility of communion with spirits like man's own.

The spiritual nature of man is the one least known, and yet it has played no insignificant part in the history of humanity. Here, if anywhere, man's religious instincts, impulses, emotions, and beliefs have their origin. It is round the border land of this spiritual nature that mesmerists, clairvoyants, electro-biologists, spiritualists, and religious quackeries, innumerable, are wandering and blundering, seeking for the Conditioned in the region of the Unconditioned.

I shall not indeed attempt to set foot on this mystic land, trod by apostles and prophets and seers; all I contend for is, that it exists; that there is a side of man's nature which links him on to the Godhead itself, through which God has revealed himself to humanity in *all* ages and among *all* peoples; and *not* only to one people



and one age. The proofs of the existence of this nature are as many and potent as are those for the existence and reality of the body itself. Consciousness seems to be but the surface—a small surface—of the fathomless ocean of the mysterious human nature, whose *depths* are utterly unknown and unexplored. Out of the limitless confines of consciousness there come mental moods, and strange half known fancies which play for a little on the surface, and then vanish whence they came.

To this three-fold nature of man, modern philosophy must return if any satisfactory answers are to be made to the questions: Whence am I? What am I? Whither am I tending?

John Stuart Mill demurs to Sir William Hamilton's use of the word Belief; says that the distinction between it and knowledge is one of terminology; and that Hamilton has brought to naught his own doctrine of the Relativity, by the admission of a second source of intellectual conviction called Belief.

It is not at all to be wondered at that Mill would have none of Hamilton's belief. With Mill, Belief is a conviction somewhat short of complete, and knowledge is complete conviction. In fact Belief is just knowledge with a little less certitude.

Hamilton says, "that we have sources of intellectual conviction called Belief, which are anterior to knowledge, and are the foundation of it." Quoting St. Austin, he says, "we *know* what rests on reason, we *believe* what rests on authority." Again he says: "The sphere of our belief is much more extensive than the sphere of our knowledge." When I deny that the infinite can by

us be known, I am far from denying that by us it must and ought to be believed.

Mill has not understood Hamilton. The meanings each attach to the word Belief are as wide asunder as the poles. Does the existence of Belief invalidate the Relativity? We think not; and this will be apparent to all who have followed what has been said under the Relativity.

In Psychology, terms have special names assigned them according as they are the power, process, or product of a faculty. It might help considerably to avoid ambiguity and infuse clearness and precision of thinking, if this were done for Belief. The term *Faith* might be appropriated to the faculty or power; *Believing*, to the exercise of that faculty, the process; and *Belief* to the product.

*Faith* is the faculty by which we accept testimony, subjective and objective, chiefly the former.

*Believing* is the process, the act of accepting testimony after scrutiny: the process by which intelligence assents to evidence, subjective and objective. It is most appropriately applied to the former, though ever present in both.

*Belief* is the correspondence of mental conviction with phenomena and noumena. It is in short the product resulting from the acceptance of the veracity of consciousness.

*Knowledge* is the correspondence of mental conviction with the facts given in immediate perception, and with inductions made in the presence of objects.

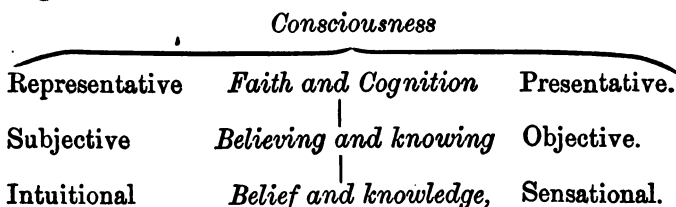
The terms believing and knowing are, in reality, different aspects of the *same* mental act, different pro-

cessess dealing with the *same* reality. The former deals largely, but not wholly, with the subjective, the representative part of the cognition; the latter, with the objective, the presentative. Belief and knowledge are thus both verities, depending for their veracity and acceptability *both alike* on proof, but proof of different kinds: the one appeals to the senses and to reason; the other, chiefly to the higher reason, (*nous*) alone. They are, indeed, but names for the conclusions at which the thinker arrives by various intermingling routes.

Judging and reasoning are, essentially, the comparison of terms, notions, or ideas, either immediately together or by means of a third. It thus appears, that believing, knowing, judging, and reasoning are, all of them, processes, each in their own way, dealing with the veracity of consciousness, its data.

Faith is present in every act of consciousness; consciousness presupposes Faith, its process *Believing*, and its product *Belief*.

The following diagram may help to illustrate, that in every process and product of Faith and Cognition, the Representative and Presentative, the Subjective and Objective, the Intuitional and the Sensational, are always mingled together. Faith cannot *be* without Cognition; Cognition cannot *be* without Faith.



In short, the synthesis of Faith and Cognition is but

another statement of what I have in another place called the Great Law of Human Knowledge. (See The Relativity.)

With the Theological aspects of Faith I am not at present concerned. It seems to me that there is too much of a tendency to speak of Theological Faith as a special gift granted to a few only, and on special conditions. I am quite prepared to accept Erskine of Linlathen's definition.\* Faith, is a belief in the promises of God to man. An unconditional acceptance of these promises. *Justification by Faith*, is believing the reality of God's love to *me*; and taking for granted *my* forgiveness as included in that love. Justification simply means making right; so that, if I believe that God really loves me, I am sure he will make me right; and this confidence or faith in his love implies as a necessary consequent my being set right or justified. Justification by Faith is a belief in God's promises, and these promises include justification.

Faith lies at the very root of our nature; we are born with it, and we cannot cast it from us. Faith is co-extensive with all our faculties. It is a capacity underlying all modes of thought and presupposed by them. Without consciousness there could be no record of sensations, percepts, concepts, etc., kept by the mind, in short no knowledge derived from Experience or Intuition. So likewise, without Faith consciousness is impossible. Wanting Faith, consciousness would only open up to us a wilderness of unsubstantialities, a meaningless phan-

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\* The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel by Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, pp. 39-40, Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh.

tasmagoria. Consciousness in its last analysis rests on Faith. Knowledge without Faith is impossible. Looked at even from an Experientialist's view point, the veracity, the trustworthiness, the faithfulness of knowledge derived from sensation must rest on the testimony of immediate perception, or of reason, or of some combination of these. But it is apparent that Faith could only thus be exercised—believing made possible, knowledge *be* knowledge and not nescience and a delusion, on the pre-supposed admission of the trustworthiness of the products of the presentative and regulative faculties; and these faculties we could not trust unless we first postulate our belief in their veracity.

There is another step, and it seems to me a natural and a necessary one. How can we place reliance on these faculties? Because we have no other alternative: simply because God, who gave us them, is truth itself. Thus, beginning in Experientialism, if we are to accept the veracity of consciousness, we are driven up by a gradual ascent to the Godhead itself. Faith, Believing, Belief, we could not have by any conceivable law of association, nor of sensation and feeling, though sensation and feeling are ever present and ever becoming associated together; nor by any imaginable combination of these. Faith is not by any means an *educt* of experience; it is co-natural, not post-natal; it is a necessary condition by which mind is governed: the foundation principle of mental phenomena, without which intelligence is *not* possible. Faith, in short, is intuitional, not experiential; transcendental, not sensational; unbegotten by time, or sense, or self; but coming with us into life ready to be waked into action.

Faith then is a radical principle of our nature. With-

out Faith knowledge is impossible ; without it our whole nature is a lie ; and God and the Universe deceptions. See how it has been used in the whole redemptive scheme from first to last, beginning with our common mother's belief in the promised seed ; belief in the promise that, " In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed ; " belief in the promised land, and " I shall make of thee a great nation. " Then, again, there comes out in grèater prominence, belief in a promised Messiah ; and what is there remains to Christians but a belief in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and mediatorship of the same Messiah ? Want of Faith underlies all sin. Sin is an act of unbelief. Faith underlies all Christianity, even its highest virtue, Charity, is but a conviction, a belief that men are not so bad as they seem ; that there is a something loveable about them. And this is proved by the fact that the greatest miscreants have always some loving heart clinging to them. Flowers were strewn on Nero's grave. Paul astonishes us with his catalogue of Faith. Every religious system is full of it. Society is bound together by it. Humanity lives in it. What we know not, that we must believe. Take an illustration : the soul—what is it ? Where is its seat ? Aristotle said, it was " all in the whole, and all in every part ; " and we have left it where he found it, that is nowhere. What is it about during sleep ? Does it not give us glimpses of a state of being of which the body knows nothing ? How little do we *know* of it ! How much do we believe ! Again, life—what is *it* ? What sort of answer has civilization, and learning, and science been able to give ? Are we any nearer the mystery of existence than barbarians ? Why do we affirm that the Soul's or Spirit's functions continue

when those of the body are laid down in death? Is it because we *know* it? Certainly not; we *know* nothing about it, yet we believe it, must believe it; and we act on that belief as if it were assurance doubly sure.

Enough has been said to indicate the way out of the seeming difficulty raised by Mill regarding Knowledge and Belief; and it may be, to show, that Hamilton's Doctrine of the Unconditioned is no mere logical puzzle about words; but that it contains greater truths than are dreamed of, by those who are his critics and professed examiners.

Professor H. Calderwood's Philosophy of the Infinite (1854; 3rd edition, 1872) is characterised by acuteness and independence of thought, yet it appears to me that at bottom Hamilton's position remains unshaken. Hamilton says, the Infinite and Absolute we cannot *know*. "The Infinite I contemplate is considered as *in thought*. The Infinite beyond thought being, it may be, an object of belief but not of knowledge." The Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, as objects of thought, are negative, that is if we think of them, we think of them as conditioned, the conditions of so thinking them being that they are Unconditioned. This thought, so far as cognition is concerned, is a negative one. Professor Calderwood calls it a positive one; calls it knowledge. It is positive so far as it is *thinkable*; but it is thinkable only on the supposition (on the condition) that it is unconditioned, all positive thought being conditioned, that is, we think of it as standing outside the sphere of our cognitive faculties, for that it *must* do if it is unconditioned. *Know* it we cannot as positively thinkable; know it we *may* as the subjective affirma-

tion of an objective negation; *believe* it we must as objectively existing beyond thought and cognition.

The real difference is thus one of knowledge and belief. The one Philosopher says "we believe," the other says "we know." Knowledge and belief are, as we have shown, fused together in all consciousness; and it is in this synthesis of belief and knowledge, that a solution must be looked for of the question—"How far, and in what way, our fundamental, intellectual, and moral conceptions are rationally predicable of an Infinite Being."

The late Professor Mansel's application of Hamilton's Doctrine of the Infinite to Theology has, I venture to think, been undertaken too soon; neither Philosophy nor Theology were ready for it. Much yet remains to be accomplished before this can be attempted with any fair hope of success.

The importance of the doctrine of the Conditioned has, it seems to me, not yet even been realized, much less appreciated. This doctrine, coupled with the synthesis of belief and knowledge in cognition, which, indeed, Hamilton did little more than indicate, contains the solution, in embryo at least, of the great problem of the Unconditioned. If Mill knew the meaning and application of the terms Conditioned and Unconditioned, and their historic relation to speculation since Kant's time, then he has utterly ignored this knowledge, and argued so as to exhibit his complete misconception. In Pope's day we are told:

"Coxcombs vanquished Berkeley with a grin."

The present is, probably, too polite an age, either to grin or sneer at Berkeley, or the topics of a nature



kindred to those which he discussed. Mill was not a coxcomb. I do not for one moment believe that Mill either intentionally or unintentionally meant to vanquish Hamilton with a grin; but it seems to me that his whole criticism of Hamilton's Philosophy is the nearest approach to a sneer that the politeness of his own gentlemanly nature would admit of. There is not much in common between Hamilton and Mill: they are separated from each other by the whole breadth of the heavens; by the whole extent of education, training, habit, taste, thought, and surrounding influences. This, no one need be told who knows anything of the two men. Each lived and thought and had his being in regions wide apart. The practical, the concrete, the utilitarian was the "vital breath, the native air" of the one. What Mill was able to accomplish in these regions is not altogether unworthy of consideration. To resuscitate a seemingly moribund philosophy, and vindicate for it a position and a name; to breathe new life and vigour into thought and speculation; to fix the limits of the Finite, the Relative, the Knowable, the Conditioned, and distinctly mark it off from the Infinite, the Absolute, the Believable, the Unconditioned,—these are the chief glories of Hamilton. Mid these he lived, and on these he spent his strength, till disease and death, all too soon, struck him down, and left his task unfinished, with only indications here and there of how he might have completed it.

"It is unfortunate," as Professor Veitch says, "not for philosophy, but for its popular appreciation, that its processes, and to a considerable extent even its results, cannot be made palpable to the crowd."

The Physical Sciences can, on the other hand, appeal to the multitude in sensuous experiment and demonstration. It requires no energy of judgment, no concentration of thought, on the part of the many, to realize, and in some measure appreciate, results, which may have cost the investigator much thought, much toil, and many tentative experiments. Results can be made so palpable, and processes appear so simple, that initiated and uninitiated alike are pleased and captivated. The results and processes of Philosophy are only realizable in thought, and of course in language, for language is only thought made audible and visible. The bulk of men are thus, from want of leisure and necessary training, quite unable to follow Philosophy in its processes, and only dimly realize its results; frequently, indeed, these results are attributed, not to Philosophy, but to some such indefinite phrase, as "the progress of science," and "the application of the scientific method to the investigation of nature." Philosophy has laid the broad and sure foundations on which have been reared the great fabrics of the Physical Sciences. All that Modern Science has achieved,—we may say all that it ever shall achieve,—it owes to Philosophy. Philosophy taught Modern Science those very methods, both of deduction and induction, of analysis and synthesis, of experiment and observation and generalization by which alone it has been able to compass the results it has achieved, and had Modern Science been more true to Philosophy, its greatest teacher, it might have avoided much of what there is of hasty and crude generalization and self-assertive infallibility.

One of the many characteristics of this age is the

power of using language without due precision of thought.

Many who speak and write, and the far greater number who hear and read, have but very imperfect, frequently erroneous, notions, which they habitually attach to certain watchwords, party cries, and innumerable expressions in frequent use in politics, theology, commerce, and social life. No greater boon could be conferred on any generation than a training in precision of language and precision of thinking. The Physical Sciences yield this training only to their most devoted sons. It is not a difficult matter to acquire a smattering of some of the "ologies," and a facility of talking about them with ease and intelligence; but if they are to be made subservient to clearness of thought and expression, and exactness of observation, it can only be accomplished by a devotion little short of a lifetime, and a training such as that which Philosophy alone can yield. The study of Philosophy, it appears to me, affords the surest and most effectual safeguard against those torrents of crude, indigested thought and expression which in this age of hurry and clamour for results, are continually being poured out from press, and pulpit, and platform. The end and aim of all education ought to be thought and the power of thinking; and there are few better instruments for awakening and quickening thought, and inculcating and developing habits of the highest importance intellectually, than the study of those questions which involve man's nature and destiny, "matter, mind, freedom, God, the finite, the infinite."

"The method of reflective analysis in Philosophy — the analysis of experience and its conditions as

realised in consciousness—this is the old method which has been more or less faithfully practised in Scotland, we may say in Britain, since the time of Locke. There is still in it hope for the future. It has been somewhat narrowly understood and applied among us. Its true sphere is not merely the consciousness of the individual; it is the consciousness of the race. I see hope for philosophy in this slow, careful, almost painful method, if it be extended in its scope beyond the individual consciousness to the phenomena of animal life, to the course of history, to philology, political institutions and scientific thought. Wherever, and howsoever, man has expressed himself, thither and through that form, through its origin and genesis, reflective analysis should follow him." *Professor Veitch, Mind, No. VI.*

Here is a field of speculation and a method, wide enough, profound enough, and varied enough, to occupy the thoughts of earnest thinkers in all time coming. He who would faithfully follow it out must content himself with thoughtful days, and nights not altogether given to repose; finding in it, not riches, not power, not fame, not ambition in the sense that most men use that term, not always the sympathy and support and affection that are sometimes lavished freely on the leaders of men, not indeed any of those objects for which the bulk of men tussle and agonize; but he will find, if his patience fail him not, the exceeding great reward of the lone thinker, who, high above the din and discord of human turmoil, can trace humanity's footsteps from its tottering infancy down through all time to the consummation of the present; following man "wheresoever

and howsoever he has expressed himself;" rewarded indeed, if in his journeyings he lay his hands on any of the threads that may unravel one of the many tangled skeins of man's existence.

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# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

By THOS. EDWARDS, F.E.I.S.

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Mr. Edwards avows in his preface that he has "not made any attempt to write a book for infants," nor does he profess to have given to the world an exhaustive treatise on philology within the compass of eighty pages duodecimo. What he has endeavoured to do is probably more to induce the young student, who would shrink from the awe-inspiring tomes of Max Müller and Bopp and Turner and Trench, to take up under his unassuming guidance a branch of study little known in Indian schools and colleges, in the hope that the attention have been once gained, more matured results may hereafter be looked for. The intention has all our sympathy, and Mr. Edwards will well repay perusal.—*Indian Daily News*, April 13th, 1878.

Mr. Edwards's book pretends to be nothing more than a mere "rough draft" of the subject with which it deals, compiled from the more elaborate works of Max Müller, Morris, Kean, Marsh, Trench, Latham, and others; though far from exhaustive, however, it is something more than this.—*Englishman*, April 12th, 1878.

The first fifteen pages of this little work contain a well digested sketch of the chief families of the various languages of the world. In the main portion of his work, Mr. Edwards reproduces with care and accuracy the theories of our great philologists as to the changes through which the English tongue has passed since its introduction into the British Isles. Mr. Edwards's style is forcible and clear. The book ought to be of great service to the under-graduates of the University.—*The Statesman and Friend of India*, April 22nd, 1878.

This little book is worthy of notice as a manual prepared for students in India; and if it may be accepted as a type of the kind of school and college books demanded in Calcutta, one may infer, that a certain amount of thoroughness and depth is considered essential to elementary study. The work would certainly prove useful to all English readers who have yet to acquire a knowledge of the history of their own language, from the earliest discoverable traces of it in the remote parts, and to those who wish to make an easy beginning of the science of language. His little book is no mere compilation, and the writer has evidently thought for himself on this important subject.—*The Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 26th, 1878.

From the far East has come to us a very good sketch history of the English language by a former teacher in Glasgow, and a Fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland, giving in a concise form the results of the labours of Max Müller, Morris, Earle, Latham, &c. After briefly discussing the various theories as to the origin of language, the author, while admitting the unity of the human race, and therefore the unity of language, traces all existing languages to three families, the Turanian, the Semetic, and the Aryan, to the latter of which the English language belongs. But "a language like all earthly things," he says, "is changeable, and not stable."

The author details in an agreeable and lucid manner the progress of the language from Low Dutch to the English of the present day, the changes in its pronunciation, in its grammar, in its vocabulary, and the history of its loss and gain in these. We can honestly recommend it as a class-book for pupil teachers of the fourth and fifth years.—*The Educational News*, October 19th, 1878.

The history of a language, then, is the history of a people, but it is only within the last 60 years or so that students have set themselves systematically to read it. The literature of the new science is already not small, and it is constantly receiving accessions. No addition can be more worthy of honourable mention than this little volume before us. It is small and unpretentious; but it is a model of conciseness, of clear headed condensation. It does nothing more than it professes to do, *viz.*, to give "a short history of the English language, an introductory rough draft of what may afterwards be filled in with more minuteness and detail." But every writer does not always achieve what he avowedly undertakes. Mr. Edwards does; he carries out his purpose completely and admirably. While placing before us the digest of a vast amount of reading and research, the author freely refers to authorities for more detailed information. While therefore to the average reader who has not time to read and verify for himself, this will be a valuable compendium of information concerning the English language; to the student it will prove to be a most desirable handbook.

Apart from the subject of the little work and its admirable treatment, there are two points which increase its interest and value in our eyes. It is the production of a quondam teacher and citizen of Glasgow; and it is an emanation from the Press of the capital of our Eastern Empire.—*The Glasgow Herald*, November 14th, 1878.

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